

REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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Cohn's Comment



November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month, which reminds us that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the United States.

With nearly 87 percent of lung cancer caused by tobacco use, one focus of Lung Cancer Awareness Month is prevention. The most effective way to prevent lung cancer is to not smoke. Unfortunately, non-smokers also get lung cancer. This is one reason why I am working on legislation for next year that will require all new multi-unit housing developments to set aside one-third of the units as non-smoking. This approach to battling lung cancer has been very successful in trial areas in California. Everyone knows the dangers associated with second hand smoke. This legislation will provide a new level of protection against lung cancer.

To encourage smokers to quit, the American Cancer Society promotes the Great American Smoke Out on the third Thursday of November. Research has shown that people with lung cancer who quit smoking during treatment live longer than those that continue to smoke. This proves that it is never too late to stop smoking.

Currently, there are no screening tests available to detect early stages of lung cancer. However, the National Cancer

(Continued on page 2)

2005 Year End Legislative Roundup

SACRAMENTO – October marked the end of the first year of the two-year legislative session. Assembly Member Cohn had ten bills reach the Governor's desk, seven of which were signed into law. Below is a complete summary of Cohn's legislative activity for 2005.

Bills Signed Into Law

AB 99 – Protective orders: expiration. This law extends the maximum length of a protective order that a court can issue from three years to five years. A protective order safeguards a victim of domestic violence by prohibiting their abuser from going to places

such as their home, school or work.

AB 100 – Battered women. This law will help to guarantee that domestic violence shelters receive the support they need from the state. It also ensures that this support is applied in the best interest of victims of domestic violence.

AB 102 – Parole: High-risk sex offenders. This law will keep high-risk sex offenders on specialized supervision while on parole. This provides closer monitoring of these offenders to prevent them from committing further crimes.

(Continued on page 3)

FREE Flu Shots at Cohn's Carnival & Health Fair

This Saturday, November 5th 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Sherman Oaks Community Center

1800-A Fruitdale Ave, San José, CA 95128

Contact Tori Ueda for more details at (408) 282-8920 or
tori.ueda@asm.ca.gov. ♦

Cohn Holds Advance Health Care Directive Workshop

SANTA CLARA – Assembly Member Rebecca Cohn held an informational workshop in Santa Clara on October 20th on the Advance Health Care Directive (AHCD) and its importance. The AHCD is a legal form that allows you to record your final wishes, such as organ donation, do not resuscitate orders and designating who is allowed to make decisions on your behalf. The AHCD protects your loved ones from exhausting legal battles if you are unable to speak for yourself.

Dr. Rex Greene, a northern California oncologist and attorney Susan Penney, both of the California Medical Association (CMA) assisted with a presentation. The CMA is one of the state's foremost authorities on advanced directives.

Advance directives also are available for a nominal fee at the CMA website: www.cmanet.org. ♦



Cohn and Dr. Rex Greene listen as Susan Penney explains the AHCD

(Continued from page 1)

Institute is sponsoring the National Lung Screening Trial to find a screening test that will work. This is important, because the earlier you can diagnose cancer, the greater the chance to eliminate it from a person's system. In this particular trial, doctors will compare a chest x-ray with a spiral computed tomography (CT) scan to determine each test's effectiveness in screening people at risk of developing lung cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, lung cancer kills more than 160,000 people yearly, which is more than breast, prostate and colorectal cancers combined. Research continues to improve prevention, detection and treatment of lung cancer, as well as to learn more about how best to provide support for men and women living with lung cancer.

Another group addressing the disease is the Lung Cancer Alliance. It is the only national non-profit organization dedicated solely to advocating for people living with lung cancer or those at risk for the disease. The Alliance offers unique patient education and support programs focused on helping people directly affected by lung cancer.

Their programs include the Lung Cancer Hotline (800-298-2436), a toll-free information and referral service for lung cancer patients and caregivers; the Phone-Buddy program, a peer-to-peer support network; Lung Cancer Awareness Month, a national education and advocacy program; and Advocacy Alert, where advocates can receive alerts about important lung cancer issues.

The long-term goal is to eradicate lung cancer, but we also must change the public perception of the disease and make fighting it a priority for more people. As always, I look forward to your thoughts on this matter.

— Rebecca Cohn

Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov ♦

SAVE THE DATE – “STRANGER DANGER” CAMP IS ON ITS WAY!

“Stranger Danger” Camp

and Children's Safety Resource Faire

Saturday, December 10th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Carson Elementary School

4245 Meg Drive, San Jose, CA 95136

Contact Julie Lind at (408) 282-8920 or

julie.lind@asm.ca.gov for more information. ♦

Cohn, Students Clean Guadalupe River

SAN JOSÉ — As part of the Santa Clara Valley Water District's on-going waterways adoption program, Assembly Member Cohn returned to the Guadalupe River with a team of volunteers to clean up the river and its surrounding banks. Students from Leland and Branham High



Cohn and volunteers pictured with their haul

Schools joined Cohn in removing litter and debris from a stretch of the river alongside Almaden Expressway. Anticipating a high volume of waste based on the last cleanup in April, Cohn arranged to have a dumpster on site. Among the trash removed from the river were several chairs, seven shopping carts and a mattress set. ♦

SJ Libraries Offer Free Online Tutors to Students

SAN JOSÉ — Students in San José never have to be stumped by a tough homework assignment again! Students in grade 4 through the second year of college can simply visit any San José Public Library to get immediate, free help in math, science, social science and English from qualified tutors.

Students log on at San José Public Library's public access computers or remotely via the library's website

www.SJLibrary.org click on *Live Homework Help* and connect within minutes to the Online Classroom. After entering their grade and subject, they are matched with a live tutor, certified to provide assistance in that area.



The service is accessible remotely via the Internet from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Spanish-language assistance in math and science is available Sunday through Thursday, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Live Homework Help is easy to use. Students and tutors can

review specific homework questions, as well as subject-specific concepts using features such as controlled chat, an interactive white board and shared Web browsing in the Online Classroom. Tutors and students can also type math equations using a special math tool.

All tutors are certified teachers, college professors, professional tutors or graduate school students from across the country.

The program is made possible through a grant from the

California State Library.

Supported by the U.S.

Institute of Museum and Library services under the Library Services and Technology Act, *Live Homework Help* in San José is being provided

through a partnership between the California State Library and the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System.

For more information, visit www.SJLibrary.org, contact your neighborhood San José library or call King Library Youth Services at (408) 808-2183. ♦

Candlelight Vigil Remembers Domestic Violence Victims

CAMPBELL — Assembly Member Cohn held her first annual Candlelight Vigil in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month on October 26th in Campbell outside City Hall. Many members of the community attended, coming together to learn facts about domestic violence and to listen to a story of survival from a woman who used to be a victim. The vigil focused on remembering the suffering of the victims, to reaffirm the community's commitment to fight against domestic violence so that we can eventually break that cycle and make sure not even one more person is a victim. Domestic violence affects people of all races, religions, socio-economic backgrounds and sexual orientations, and only by speaking up and speaking out will we be able to make it stop. For more information on domestic violence and services available to victims in Santa Clara County, contact Julie Lind at (408) 282-8920 or julie.lind@asm.ca.gov. ♦



Cohn conducted a hearing on domestic violence in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Community in Santa Clara on Oct. 26.

Incest Exception Ended with New Bill

SACRAMENTO — In California, continuous sexual abuse of a child will result in six to sixteen years in prison, unless the victim is your own child, your step-child or living in your house. Under current law, continuous sexual abuse of your own child can get you therapy and an expunged record.

Besides the obvious physical abuse, the emotional damage that is inflicted upon a child who is abused by a family member is devastating. The abuser is often a person who the child trusts. When that trust is broken, the emotional foundation of the child is destroyed.

Senate Bill 33, co-authored by Assembly Member Cohn, ends the practice of giving preferential treatment to child molesters simply because their victim was a family member or friend. It ends the practice of giving child molesters therapy instead of prison time and then having their charges dropped so that their criminal record is clean. It also ends the practice of giving lighter penalties to adults who have sex with their own children by charging them with “incest” instead of more serious sex crimes.

This bill, signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger, sends the message that child sexual abuse is always a serious crime. ♦

Year End Legislative Summary: Cohn has seven bills signed into law

(Continued from page 1)

AB 112 – Protective orders:

enforcement priority. This law will help to ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence by allowing an emergency protective order to trump a criminal order only when it provides more protection to the victim.

AB 113 – Parole placement. This law doubles the distance that high risk sex offenders must live from public and private schools from ¼ mile to ½ mile. This law also adds high schools to the prohibited areas.

AB 114 – Child abuse. This law allows juries to hear that a defendant in a child abuse case has a prior history of child abuse. This law provides victims of child abuse with the same protection that is given to sexual assault, domestic violence and elder abuse victims.

AB 118 – Protective orders: minor children. This law will prevent family court judges from granting visitation or custody to a parent with a criminal protective order issued against them.

Requiring judges to take the protective order into consideration protects families against future violence.

Vetoed by the Governor

AB 47 – Public contracts:

Department of Corrections: medical care services. This bill would have required the Department of Corrections (DOC) to competitively bid their medical contracts. Last year, the DOC spent \$4 billion on medical contracts for 161,000 prisoners without putting any of the contracts out to bid.

AB 97 – School budget reserves.

This bill would have allowed a school district facing an increase in its budget reserve due to declining enrollment to phase in the increased reserve over three years. Only school districts demonstrating financial responsibility and academic progress would have qualified.

AB 880 – Dependent children. This bill would have required the Department of Social Services to develop best practices to locate a

foster child's relatives and extended family. Advances in search technology and statewide partnerships could lead to increased placement of foster children with family members.

Bills Not Passed by Legislature

AB 59 – Domestic violence: presence of minors: enhancements.

This bill would have created stiffer sentences for acts of domestic violence committed in the presence of children.

AB 98 – Firearms. This bill would have closed a loophole that allows unloaded firearms to be carried in public as long as they are not concealed.

AB 106 – Spousal battery: fines: amnesty. This bill would have created a one-time fee amnesty program for late spousal abuse fines. The bill was modeled on the recent statewide tax amnesty program.

If you have any bill ideas for the next legislative year, contact Richard Woonacott at (916) 319-2024 or richard.woonacott@asm.ca.gov. ♦